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United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Administration
Bureau of Animal Industry

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REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE
CAMPAIGN AGAINST FOOT-AND-MOUTH
DISEASE IN MEXICO

No. 16



NOTE: This report has been prepared on the basis of the best information available at the time of compilation but is subject to later revision. It covers the principal developments in the campaign since the issuance of the 15th report of the series, on August 9, 1948.

Quarantined Area in Mexico
Reduced 24,000 Square Miles

An encouraging development in the fight against foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico was the lifting of the existing quarantine from approximately 24,000 square miles of territory, effective September 20. Extensive inspections had shown this part of the quarantined area to be free of the disease. The changes were recommended jointly by Mexican and United States officials in charge of the eradication campaign and were concurred in by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The relocation of the line southward marks the third action of its kind this year. The total reduction in size of the quarantined areas as the result of the three changes is about 10 percent of the area originally quarantined.

Most of the freed territory was never infected but it had been quarantined as a safety measure until thorough inspections could be made. Other parts of the area contained only a few infected herds, which were destroyed and the premises disinfected. After this, their freedom from the disease was established by the introduction of test animals, all of which remained healthy.

Though following a somewhat irregular course the new location of the quarantine line represents an average southward movement of about 30 miles. The largest gain was at its western end where the new terminus, Barra de Navidad, is 110 miles south of the former one. Another large gain was the drop of the line from the city of Zacatecas to Aguascalientes, an advance of 70 miles. Between the Pan American Highway and Tampico, at the eastern end of the line, no change occurred. At other points the advances were of variable size.

Contracts for 133,200,000 Pounds of Canned Meat

The U. S. Department of Agriculture announced September 24 that contracts have been awarded by the Production and Marketing Administration for the purchase, during the fiscal year, of 133,200,000 pounds of Mexican canned meat and meat products for export to foreign countries. The purchases are to be made from processing plants in northern Mexico. The prices provided in the contracts are 28 cents a pound for canned meat and 18 cents for canned edible meat byproducts.

The awarding of the contracts furthers a program begun in November 1947 to help provide an outlet for cattle produced in northern Mexico, export of which was halted by the presence of foot-and-mouth disease in other parts of Mexico. Department officials estimate that if all contracts now outstanding are fulfilled, they will provide an outlet for approximately 520,000 cattle. This is approximately the number that formerly entered the United States annually on the hoof.

Large-Scale Vaccine Production

Foot-and-mouth disease vaccine production in Mexico topped 100,000 doses a week at the end of August. This was more than 10 times the weekly output during May, when the laboratory of the joint Commission in charge of foot-and-mouth disease eradication began to produce the protective vaccine in large quantities. During September, the laboratory's production increased still more, totaling 630,000 doses for the month. All the vaccine is fully tested for safety and protective value before it is sent to the field for use.

In preparation for still greater production the Commission recently doubled the facilities of its vaccine laboratory at San Jacinto, a suburb of Mexico, and also acquired a slaughterhouse in another suburb, Ixtapalapa, to triple the output of the virus used in making vaccine.

During the week ended October 9, 1948, the Commission produced 270,000 doses of vaccine. There is every reason to believe that the production for October will exceed 1,000,000 doses.

Vaccination of Animals, By Species

A summary of vaccination operations, reported by the United States section of the joint Commission in Mexico, shows that up to October 2, 1948, the total number of animals vaccinated under official supervision was 574,802. Although most discussions have referred to cattle in connection with vaccination, all the other principal species of domestic animals are included in the data, as the following summary shows:

Animals vaccinated against foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico, by species, to October 2, 1948

Cattle - - - - -	379,291	Goats - - - - -	53,698
Sheep - - - - -	72,667	Swine - - - - -	<u>69,146</u>
		Total- - - - -	574,802

About four-fifths of the vaccine has been administered to animals in the protective zones adjoining the quarantine lines, thereby creating belts of resistant animals to prevent the disease from spreading. The remainder has been used in the main infected area in central Mexico.

As the supply of vaccine increases, the rate of application of the vaccine in the field also increases. During the week ended October 9, 1948, a total of 149,000 animals were vaccinated.

Extensive Vaccination Program Planned

Success in first halting the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in central Mexico and then in conducting effective eradication work in some of the outlying areas has provided a basis for further control of the disease by vaccination. Using the newly established quarantine line as a base from which to operate, inspection and vaccination teams are now to move southward, examining and vaccinating all susceptible animals. If any cases of active infection are

encountered by the inspection teams, the infected and exposed animals will be slaughtered and buried and the premises thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. This operation of inspection and vaccination will continue for 6 months. At the end of the 6 months' period the teams will return to the base quarantine line and revaccinate all animals in the area, since by that time the protection given by the original vaccination will have decreased greatly, if not disappeared.

The object of this strategy is to render vast numbers of animals over a large area south of the quarantine line resistant to the disease. Then if thorough inspections show the absence of the disease in that area, the quarantine line will be moved farther south to contain the newly freed territory. The success of the plan depends, of course, on reasonably favorable conditions including a continued cooperative attitude of the people.

In preparation for an extensive vaccination program in southeastern Mexico also, representatives of the Commission are explaining the advantages of vaccination to livestock owners. The general public attitude toward the use of vaccine is reported to be favorable and some vaccination is already in progress in that area.

Extensive Disinfection Activities

In efforts both to prevent the spread of infection and to destroy it wherever possible, the Commission's disinfection program has been extensive. During a fairly typical period -- August 1-28 -- district supervisors reported disinfection operations as follows:

Stock trucks - - - - -	15,775	Passenger planes - - - - -	1,063
Railroad cars - - - - -	4,570	Cargo planes - - - - -	164
Premises - - - - -	1,138	Boats and barges - - - - -	1,516

Other disinfection activities have included the sanitary supervision of Mexican laborers employed in the United States, with special reference to their baggage, clothing, and personal effects.

Radio Communication

For several months the Commission has had in successful operation a system of radio communication between Mexico City headquarters and district headquarters in the field. The equipment also makes possible communication from one field headquarters to another and to other field stations. Calls average about 100 a day, exclusive of radiograms. Besides proving very useful in connection with routine messages, the system has the further advantage of expediting reports of new outbreaks of the disease or other emergencies. Especially in outlying rural areas facilities previously available in Mexico for sending messages had been inadequate for the needs of the Commission.

Information Services

The Information Division of the Commission has continued to issue press, radio, and other material designed to inform the Mexican people of developments in the campaign. The recently appointed chief of the United States section of the Division is Samuel A. Montague. A current press activity is the preparation of a 32-page illustrated brochure covering numerous aspects of the control and eradication program in Mexico. Like a former one, it has received general public distribution in Mexico.

Another informational service is a series of radio releases which are sent weekly, in mimeographed form, to about 250 Mexican radio stations. These have been extensively used. Still another service which began during August is a news column "Saber" (To Know) that contains cultural, historical, and literary items interspersed with paragraphs on foot-and-mouth disease.

In the United States, as a special radio feature, the Department of Agriculture arranged for a broadcast on foot-and-mouth disease, September 25, on the American Farmer program network of the American Broadcasting Co. It contained a discussion of progress being made in the campaign in Mexico together with an

account of tough lonely work of range riders in maintaining the border patrol along the United States-Mexican boundary. Participants who spoke from Washington, D. C., were Dr. B. T. Simms, Dr. M. R. Clarkson, and Dr. M. S. Shahan, all veterinary officials. Speakers on a special pick-up from Ft. Worth, Tex., were Dr. F. M. Shigley and Mr. A. A. Anderson, of the border patrol. Participating farm radio specialists were Mr. Dana Reynolds of Washington and Mr. Layne Beaty, Ft. Worth. The program was of 15 minutes' duration. Copies of the script are available to interested persons.

Commission Personnel Exceeds 2,600

On October 2, 1948, the combined civilian personnel of the Commission in charge of the campaign against foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico comprised 2,640 persons. Of these, 460 were employees of the United States section. They included veterinarians, livestock inspectors, sanitary technicians, appraisers, paymasters, office employees, and other trained workers. The Mexican section had 233 employees of approximately similar status. The remaining 1,947 employees consisted mainly of laborers and other unskilled workers employed by the joint Commission in Mexico City and the field. The numbers and classification of the personnel have changed but little in recent months.

Border-Quarantine Enforcement

The patrol of the United States-Mexican border was marked by tragedy August 12 when Stanley R. Jeffers, a Department range rider, was shot and killed at Lajitas, Tex., on the Rio Grande River. His alleged assailant, W. L. Babb, an employee on a ranch in that locality, has been charged with murder. There were witnesses to the shooting and according to information thus far received by the Department it appears that the killing was the result of Jeffers' carrying out instructions, in line of duty, by destroying cattle that had entered the United States from Mexico.

Activities along the border have been otherwise of the usual nature. Reports for August showed the destruction of 129 animals and several thousand pounds of meat and other animal products by the border patrol. More than 50,000 automobiles and trucks were inspected, and many of the trucks in particular were cleaned and disinfected because they had contained prohibited products. The current patrol force comprises about 600 riders who travel in jeeps or by horseback.

U. S. Research Workers Detailed to Foreign Laboratories

Through arrangements with directors of foot-and-mouth disease laboratories in Europe, the Bureau of Animal Industry has again arranged to detail several of its research scientists for service abroad. Those already selected and who will leave soon are Dr. Oswald L. Osteen, Dr. Howard W. Johnson, and Dr. Howard W. Dunne, all of the Bureau's Pathological Division. They will take a moderate amount of scientific equipment with them. Drs. Osteen and Dunne will remain about a year and Dr. Johnson for several months.

Another scientist, Dr. L. O. Mott, of the same division is already engaged in scientific studies in Mexico in connection with the production of foot-and-mouth disease vaccine. Until the United States has a laboratory of its own for research on this disease it is obliged to depend on the limited facilities of foreign laboratories, which have been cooperative in this respect.

Need for Continued Vigilance Stressed

Even though the current status of the campaign against foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico is favorable, there is constant danger that the infection may enter the United States from many other sources. Extensive international airplane traffic and a large volume of commerce with countries where the disease is present constitute especially noteworthy threats.

Inspection and quarantine officials of the Department's Bureau of Animal Industry have taken all possible precautions to see that inspections are thorough and that quarantines are rigidly enforced. It is noteworthy also that the United States is approaching the twentieth year of its complete freedom from foot-and-mouth disease, which is the longest period of such freedom since records have been kept. But in spite of the reassuring nature of these developments the Department warns against undue optimism and points out the need for prompt and close cooperation between the public and veterinary officials in case the dangerous infection should appear. Prompt reports, by livestock owners, of suspected cases of the disease are particularly important.

Through its publications and picture services, the Department has endeavored to familiarize the public with the principal symptoms of foot-and-mouth disease, but should any person still be in need of such information, the Department will send it promptly on request. Requests may be made to the Information Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

